

## TIME REQUIRED FOR THIS ACTIVITY

60 Minutes

### GOALS OF THE ACTIVITY:

To identify the appropriate response to questions posed by self-represented litigants.

### PREPARATION:

You will need:

1. Index cards – enough so that each participant has 3-4 cards.
2. A container in which cards can be dropped in and then drawn out.
3. Flip chart, blackboard, or something similar to jot down participant ideas.
4. Copies of page 13 of this packet (*Questions Posed...*) - one for each participant.

Serving The Self-Represented Litigant

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ICEBREAKER: *(For a group of participants who may not be acquainted with each other.)*

Ask participants to go around the room and introduce themselves and tell about their favorite place to go on vacation.

### INTRODUCTION: *(tailor as needed)*

**FACILITATOR:** “Every day, court clerks are confronted with questions from people who need assistance. Sometimes it’s difficult to know how to respond. Today, we are going to identify some of those ‘most frequently asked questions’ and identify a strategy for addressing the questions in a way that honors the needs of the court customer without violating the principles of neutrality and impartiality.”

### ACTIVITY:

1. Hand out index cards or have a pile of cards on each table.
2. **FACILITATOR:** “Let’s begin by identifying some of the common questions you as a court clerk are generally confronted with. Take a couple of minutes. Jot down as many questions as you can think of, one on each index card, using as many cards as you need.
3. When everyone is finished or time is up, have participants drop question cards into container.
4. Pass out “*Questions Posed...*” worksheet. Encourage participants to take notes using the worksheet.
5. Ask for a volunteer to reach into container and draw out one card and read the question to the group.
6. Write the question that is read on the flipchart or blackboard.
7. Ask the group to brainstorm ideas as to how to respond to the question. Accept all suggestions.
8. After group runs out of ideas, comment that all the suggestions may be good suggestions. Ask the group to identify which response might be the “best” and why. As a group, try to come to consensus on a “best” response. Have the group document the best response on their worksheets.
9. Repeat the process with the remaining questions in the container as time allows.

### CONCLUSION:

#### **FACILITATOR:**

“Thanks for all of the great ideas you have shared today. By working together and coming up with responses that meet the needs of the customers, we have made our jobs a little easier while fostering public confidence and trust with our customers. I hope you will use these responses while you are at the counter if the opportunity arises. Thanks, again.”

# QUESTIONS POSED BY SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

*Identify the questions most often posed in your court by self-represented litigants.*

*(Some examples are already given.)*

*Identify the “best” response to each question.*

QUESTION	APPROPRIATE RESPONSE
1. Do I need a lawyer?	
2. What sentence will I get if I plead guilty?	
3. What should I put down here where it says “remedy sought”?	